



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Director of Children and Family Services

At its meeting held Wednesday, June 7, 2006, the Board took the following action:

69-C

The following statement was entered into the record for Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe:

“In Los Angeles County, nearly 21,000 foster children live away from their families in out-of-home care under the supervision of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). While DCFS conducts monthly visits to each child in foster care, monitoring the safety and quality of the services is varied and inconsistent.

“Currently, DCFS and/or the Auditor-Controller conducts an extensive program monitoring visit of group homes and FFAs twice a year, whether problems are identified or not. These activities are pursuant to stringent contract requirements with the County. In addition, the State Community Care Licensing does random audits of these sites on either a bi-annual or annual basis.

“In contrast, the County’s licensed foster family homes are only visited by the State every five years. The County has no jurisdiction over the monitoring of State-licensed foster homes. It is imperative that we enhance the County’s oversight of its State-licensed homes, where the majority of County foster children reside to provide oversight for all out-of-home care sites.”

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Therefore, Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe made a recommendation that the Director of Children and Family Services, in collaboration with the Chief Administrative Officer and County Counsel, be directed to report back to the Board within 30 days on a plan to improve the Department's existing monitoring resources in a way that will ensure that all out-of-home placement where the County's foster children reside will be subject to a consistent, efficient, high quality level of oversight, with the report to include the following:

1. Establishing a strong, efficient and consistent monitoring tool for all out-of-home care sites that focuses on outcomes and avoids duplicative activities;
2. Exploring the feasibility of creating an inspection program and the use of State funds to inspect all out-of-home care, similar to the Public Health Facility Inspection Division;
3. Working with State Community Care Licensing on granting Los Angeles County enforcement authority and the necessary funding to monitor licensed foster-care homes; and
4. Exploring the feasibility of placing certified foster homes and relative caregivers under the Foster Family Agency (FFA) jurisdiction and/or establishing monitoring and supportive services standards similar to those of the FFAs.

Supervisor Molina made the following statement:

"In Los Angeles County, approximately 20,713 foster children live away from their parents in out-of-home care. When a child is placed in a Foster Family Agency (FFA) certified home, the County generally devotes approximately three times the amount of funding to that child, than it does to a child placed in a licensed foster home or a relative's home. However, the decision to place a child into an FFA home as opposed to a licensed foster home is not guided by an assessment of the individual child's needs and established placement criteria.

"The result of this current random system is that children suffer. For example, in most cases, children placed in relative and licensed foster homes as opposed to FFA homes generally have less of their needs met because their caregivers receive less money and services to care for them. Further, some FFA caregivers choose not to adopt or obtain legal guardianship of a child because they cannot afford to forfeit the money they would lose if they chose permanency.

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“The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) should design an out-of-home care placement system where placement and funding decisions are based on a child’s needs and should design a system under which children with similar needs receive similar funding and services.”

Therefore, Supervisor Molina made a suggestion that Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe’s recommendation be amended to direct the Director of Children and Family Services to report back in 45 days with procedures for out-of-home placement of children into FFAs, licensed foster-care homes, and relative caregivers to best match the child’s needs to the placement and to ensure that funding is distributed based on a child’s needs and include in the report recommendations for any legislative changes that may be necessary to achieve these goals. Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe accepted Supervisor Molina’s amendment, with the exception that the Director of Children and Family Services report back to the Board in 30 days.

On motion Supervisor Antonovich, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, unanimously carried, the Board took the following actions:

1. Directed the Director of Children and Family Services, in collaboration with the Chief Administrative Officer and County Counsel, to report back to the Board within 30 days on a plan to improve the Department’s existing monitoring resources in a way that will ensure that all out-of-home placement where the County’s foster children reside will be subject to a consistent, efficient, high quality level of oversight, with the report to include the following:
 - Establishing a strong, efficient and consistent monitoring tool for all out-of-home care sites that focuses on outcomes and avoids duplicative activities;
 - Exploring the feasibility of creating an inspection program and the use of State funds to inspect all out-of-home care, similar to the Public Health Facility Inspection Division;
 - Working with State Community Care Licensing on granting Los Angeles County enforcement authority and the necessary funding to monitor licensed foster-care homes; and

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69-C (Continued)

- Exploring the feasibility of placing certified foster homes and relative caregivers under the Foster Family Agency (FFA) jurisdiction and/or establishing monitoring and supportive services standards similar to those of the FFAs; and
2. Directed the Director of Children and Family Services to report back in 30 days with procedures for out-of-home placement of children into FFAs, licensed foster-care homes, and relative caregivers to best match the child's needs to the placement and to ensure that funding is distributed based on a child's needs and include in the report recommendations for any legislative changes that may be necessary to achieve these goals.

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